

Midwestern Alliance of Sovereign Tribes, MAST, Meeting July 18th-19th, 2012 Tama, Iowa

Tuesday, July 18, 2012

11:30 – Lunch, provided by Sak & Fox Tribal Council

Call to order at 12:50

Opening prayer

Welcome by the Chairman of the Sak & Fox Tribe as host to this year's MAST meeting. This is the only federally recognized tribe in the state of Iowa.

Elder's comments/suggestions period

A comment was made about the acting Secretary of Interior and how he didn't mention the Cobell case, this elder stated that he had a problem with that. However, Del Laverdure, the acting Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs did mention the case in his address to the general assembly.

Motion was made to approve the agenda, motion passed

Open discussion was held and Frank Ettawageshik spoke about topics that should be covered at the Impact meeting on the hill for the next scheduled meeting. Members of MAST need to be more proactive in creating an agenda of discussion at these types of meetings. He also raised the issue of the Robert T. Stafford Act and the need to modify for emergency aid as well as to advocate for it in the future.

Chairman Matt Wesaw, made mention that Eugene "Ribs" Whitebird did not get re-elected within his tribe, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, so MAST needs to nominate and elect a replacement for his seat as the Treasurer. He wanted to make sure that all member tribes were receiving the minutes for all the Tuesday call meetings. It was suggested that we should have a quarterly call, at a minimum in order to improve the communication here in the Midwest. The idea for a quarterly, call before a meeting would insure that everyone is on board and would have the chance to share their viewpoints. He would be willing to also hear from non-member tribes, if they to have an issue needing some attention, so that it could be heard.

Scott Vele, Executive Director of MAST

He wanted to make sure that we all thanked the Sak n Fox for inviting and hosting this MAST meeting, and wanted to make sure that all were aware of all the businesses/vendors that are on display outside the conference room.

President Tom Maulson of Lac Du Flambeau Tribe, extended an invitation to his area for a fish fry that will be utilizing the vendor in attendance, of Walleye, he also wanted to extend an invitation to Honor the Earth that will be taking place this coming weekend.

Rebecca Alegria, Legislature from the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, wanted to also thank the Sac & Fox Tribe for hosting this meeting, and wanted to also thank Chairman Taylor for the opening prayer. She also wanted to thank the Alliance for their support in passing a resolution last year. Her tribe was able to take that to talks they had with the State. Because of this resolution, the State was able to aid them in releasing sturgeon back into their water system. She wanted to stress that these resolutions do make a difference when taking issues up with the State or with the Federal Government.

Kevin Fitzgibbon, Administrator for HUD Program

Kevin remarked on how the deficit has decreased since President Obama has been in office: a \$1.4 Trillion deficit down to \$900 Million with Obama.

What are the implications of these tax cuts? He mentioned that the tax cuts should continue for the under \$250k a year income family. Social security tax also needs to be addressed and should be raised back to the original 6.2%, from the current 4%. There continues to be a need for a give and take when it comes to tax cuts, that cuts need to come from defense and from discretionary funding, which is the funding for all of the programs. Tribes should be keeping a close eye on these percentages within the National budget. The thought is that if the House and Senate get one party control, then ALL the cuts will come from discretionary funding.

He raised the issue of Indian Housing, and distributed a handout. The Housing Department is going through a needs assessment and the process is moving forward. Testimony that is being used on the hill is coming from an assessment done in 1996, which brings the need for a new one to be completed. With a new assessment, there then will be better information available during testimony. One change was the elimination of the term homeless, it will be replaced with the term HOUSLESS meaning that there are families that are without a home but are able to stay w family or friends. We, as Tribes, will now be able to turn over money, 5 times, from the IHBG through the title 6 program. More information on the budgets/programs current today was handed out.

Question from MAST to HUD was to modify the policy regarding drug abuse; we are creating our own homelessness. Those that have been convicted of drugs are not eligible for the HUD programs. Kevin responded that HUD does have legal opinions that spoke this issue; their interpretation states that the Tribal Governments can now develop policy on how they would like to address the issue. This also stands true with the legalization of medicinal marijuana that many tribes are now passing. WE now can make these decisions through policy and regulations within our own housing departments.

Chairman Matt Wesaw

Chairman Wesaw gave an update on the proposed amendments to the NCAI constitution that I have already reported on from my NCAI travel last month; same handouts were provided within in our MAST packet. When the Annual NCAI meeting starts in Sacramento, this will be the first act of business. There was much discussion held concerning amendment number two, that some states do not have a policy regarding state recognized tribes, Michigan included. The other amendments are merely clean-up of the current NCAI Constitution.

Pete Jeffries, National Engagements Director, AARP, and Campaigns and Government Affairs

His job is to get or remove our issues from the political agenda if needed. As an AARP representative he is able to get in front of the candidates this year. They have created a campaign called, You've Earned A Say Across America. This campaign allows for sharing opinions online concerning topics that are relevant to the over 50 age group. They want to strengthen Medicare and social security programs. He is here today to solicit our opinions and is passing out a social security questionnaire. The main thing that the AARP is hearing is that Washington is NOT listening to this specific group. AARP has decided to head this program in order to create a bridge of communication to weigh on these important topics of Medicare and social security. They are providing balanced information to the decision makers of the United States Government. Through the Campaign, they are able to compile both the right and left concerns/suggestions and pass along to those decision makers. The futures of both are too important for politics as usual. Current and future elders should be provided the same level of coverage and care. AARP will continue to be on the campaign trail, hosting different debates around the nation, hosting listening sessions in every state and will be asking questions to the candidates of the issues current to the over 50 age group. www.earnedasay.org will be where you can find the voters guides provided by the AARP.

Question was posed as to whether or not there are specific native initiatives being initiated by AARP. Mr. Jeffries' responded by informing MAST that in the southwest, there have been a series of You've Earned a Say, specific to tribal governments.

Brian Pierson, Attorney, Godfrey & Kahn

Mr. Pierson gave a brief update on Labor Issues and the leasing issues that happen on trust land. The

process in the past has been a long one in order for Tribes to be able to lease their own land to their own members for home ownership. The recent passage of the HEARTH Act, gave all tribal governments the ability to lease their own land to members. However, the leasing regulations will need to be approved by the Secretary of the Interior. The debated issues were the environmental issues which trigger the Environmental Act and to discuss the environmental impact/assessment. After that, comes the environmental impact statement, next, as a requirement of the Public Notice Act, a public comment/hearing will follow, in order for the public to be able to respond to that impact statement. In summary, the HEARTH Act has given tribal governments the complete control in order to lease their land on their own without approval from the Secretary of the Interior, after the approval of the policy. It clarifies part A of the original Act.

He then gave us a handout of with an update on the Patchek case. He gave a long background on how states have challenged the very topic of sovereignty over the years and how the courts haven't seen their arguments. Two major blows have been projected by the Supreme Court, the Carcieri case and the Patchek case; these are very important cases in Indian Country.

- The proposed resolution 10-12, Support for Implementing a Native American Hiring Provision and State recognition of Tribal Employment Rights Ordinances.

Mr. Rusty Barber, LCO Tribal Council, is looking for member support of this resolution; the governor of Wisconsin was to have consultation concerning the hiring process, which he changed to where it has NO tribal preference. Resolution is asking for Native Preference, where projects are on or near the reservations. This resolution is requesting that provisions be put back into practice concerning the DOT. Motion to approve, motion passed.

Mr. William Sulnickas, Regional NIMS Coordinator FEMA Region V

The proposed amendment to S.2283, Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, which will now include provisions for Tribal Governments to apply and request for emergency assistance. This is to include any and all tribes that are listed within the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994. This amendment is moving rather rapidly, and is heading towards passage. Tribes should be preparing for this to pass. A mitigation plan is needed as there may be the option for tribes to produce their own plan, but there is guidance available. Understanding the legal process is another issue that needs to be prepped for in a time of an emergency. Some tribes may continue to go thru the state for assistance or decide to use its sovereignty in order to request assistance. FEMA has created a program called Ready Indian Country and Mr. William has passed out 3 pamphlets outlining the Stafford act process when this law gets passed.

Wednesday, July 19th, 2012
Breakfast

Mr. Tracy Toulou, Director DOJ: Ethan Chatman, Craig Alexander, Stacy Mitchel

Panel is here to listen to tribal leaders concerning the policy regulating the Morton Policy. Their deadline for accepting comments is Aug 1, they are wanting to get this policy finalized and in working order. Found, traded, and commissioned for work feathers can be in possession by a Federally Recognized tribal member, without a permit. The policy being proposed can be found on their website at www.justice.gov/otj

Comment made: Allow the Tribal government to issue its own permits that would be recognized by the federal government. This would allow for our descendants to be able to also possess eagle feathers. However, due to federal statute, it states that only members of a federally recognized tribe shall possess an eagle feather.

- Resolutions 06-12, 07-12, and 09-12 as presented by Rebecca Alegria from Legislature from the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, requested the support for these three resolutions. All are included in the paper copy of my report.

At this point in the meeting I had to leave and gather my suitcase and head for my ride. Although, the last couple of items on the agenda were not addressed, however, MAST did nominate and appoint a member to the vacant seat of Treasurer. They also tabled the Midwest Health Board By-laws review discussion until next meeting to allow for tribes to meet and gather their input to be reported at the next MAST meeting. This year's MAST meeting was then called to adjourn.